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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,
PLANT LIFE HISTORY INVESTIGATIONS,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

THE PISTACHE NUT.

The pistache nut, which in America is used principally for flavoring confectionery, is the most expensive nut that reaches our market, selling at from 75 cents to \$1.50 per pound, wholesale. While the pistache tree is of slow growth, it has the advantage of being very long lived. It is rather difficult to transplant, and stocks should be set out where they are to stand and be grafted afterwards with scions of the best varieties, which the Department of Agriculture will furnish to all who set out stocks.

The pistache tree comes into full bearing from five to ten years after being grafted and yields from 20 to 100 pounds of nuts in the shell, of which it takes 3 pounds to furnish 1 pound of shelled kernels, in which form they are handled in our market. The pistache is about as hardy as the fig or almond, but has a great advantage over the almond tree in flowering later in the spring, and therefore being much less liable to injury from late frosts.

The pistache tree will not grow in arid regions, as has been claimed in certain misleading newspaper articles; nor will it yield any extraordinary profits, least of all on unirrigated arid land. It does require less water than any other of the commonly cultivated fruit or nut trees; but pistache culture is still in the experimental stage, and no one should engage in it with the idea of making fabulous profits. Pistache-nut culture promises to be profitable in the hands of careful horticulturists, but much more skill is always required to succeed with a new plant such as this than with the commonly cultivated and well-known fruit and nut trees.

The improved varieties of the pistache can be grafted on some half dozen different stocks, some of which are decidedly drought resistant, native to the deserts of the Old World, from Morocco to India, where, indeed, they are the only trees of large size occurring within the limits of these deserts. These stocks are suitable for planting in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, wherever a dense growth of mesquite or other trees indicates the presence of a stratum of water not far below the surface. A considerable number of these stocks is on hand for distribution, and there are also some ordinary stocks suitable for cultivation on ordinary fruit lands in California and Arizona. Although some of the pistache stocks, notably *Pistacia atlantica*, *Pistacia mutica*, and *Pistacia cabulica*, are drought resistant, they must be, nevertheless, watered when first set out, especially since the deep-seated root systems of such stocks are much reduced in transplanting.

Under irrigation, the trees should be set out from 25 to 30 feet apart; but where the land is rather dry and there is no abundant supply of water near the surface, they should be set from 30 to 40 feet apart. They must be irrigated until the roots strike a moist layer of earth.

From two to three years after setting out, the stocks will have attained sufficient size to be grafted—three-fourths inch to 1½ inches in diameter. Application should then be made to this office for scions, which will be sent, together with directions for grafting. Such applications should be made not later than January 15, for scions to be grafted on the stocks the following spring.

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Approved:

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